

AMENDMENT

In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1-3 before calculating the filing fee in the above-styled patent application.

Please add the following new claims:

Claims 1-3. (Cancelled.)

4. (New) A computer-implemented method for providing clearinghouse services to a client device in an Internet Protocol (IP) telephony system, comprising the steps of:

transmitting a communication session set-up request for a communication session to a proxy server from a client application operating on the client device, the client device and the proxy server coupled to an IP network;

transmitting an authorization request from the proxy server to a clearinghouse service running on a service point coupled to the IP network, the clearinghouse service being accessible only by the proxy server and one or more gateways;

transmitting an authorization response from the service point to the proxy server via the IP network, the authorization response comprising the identity of one or more terminating gateways coupled to the IP network and available to complete the communication session, and an authorization token for each identified terminating gateway;

selecting one of the terminating gateways with the proxy server to complete the communication session;

transmitting via the proxy server the communication session set-up request to the selected terminating gateway via the IP network; and

establishing the communication session via the selected terminating gateway with the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

5. (New) The method of Claim 4, further comprising receiving user authentication information, wherein the user authentication information comprises a pass-word.

6. (New) The method of Claim 4, further comprising receiving user authentication information, wherein the user authentication information comprises payment information.

7. (New) The method of Claim 4, further comprising terminating the call set-up request if the client application is not a valid user of the services maintained at the proxy server.

8. (New) The method of Claim 4, wherein transmitting via the proxy server a communication session set-up request to the selected terminating gateway via the IP network further comprises formatting the set-up request according to one of a H.323 and SIP protocol.

9. (New) The method of Claim 4, further comprising determining if the proxy server is a valid user of the call delivery services of the selected terminating gateway and determining if an authorization token has been issued by a known and valid clearinghouse service.

10. (New) The method of Claim 4, further comprising determining if the proxy server is a valid user of the call delivery services of the selected terminating gateway and determining if an authorization token has been issued within an expiration period.

11. (New) The method of Claim 4, further comprising determining if the proxy server is a valid user of the call delivery services of the selected terminating gateway and comparing a called number and a call identifier to information maintained in an authorization token.

12. (New) A computer-implemented method for providing clearinghouse services to a client device in an Internet Protocol (IP) telephony system, comprising the steps of:

transmitting a communication session set-up request to a proxy server from the client device, the client device and the proxy server coupled to an IP network;

transmitting an authorization request from the proxy server to a clearinghouse service running on a service point coupled to the IP network, the service point being inaccessible by the client application;

transmitting an authorization response from the service point to the proxy server via the IP network, the authorization response comprising the identity of one or more terminating gateways coupled to the IP network and available to complete the communication session;

launching a client application at the client device and routing the identity of one or more terminating gateways from the proxy server to the client application;

selecting one of the terminating gateways with the client application to establish the communication session;

transmitting via the client application, the communication session set-up request to the selected terminating gateway via the IP network; and

establishing the communication session via the selected terminating gateway with the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

13. (New) The method of Claim 12, further comprising terminating the communication session set-up request if the client application is not a valid user of the services maintained at the proxy server.

14. (New) The method of Claim 12, further comprising determining if the proxy server is a valid user of the clearinghouse services by establishing a secure communications link between the proxy server and the service point and evaluating the proxy server with the service point.

15. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein launching a client application at the client device further comprises dynamically constructing a web page.

16. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein transmitting via the client application the communication session set-up request to the selected terminating gateway via the IP network further comprises formatting the set-up request according to one of a H.323 and SIP protocol.

17. (New) The method of Claim 12, further comprising receiving user authentication information, wherein the user authentication information comprises a pass-word.

18. (New) The method of Claim 12, further comprising receiving user authentication information, wherein the user authentication information comprises payment information.

19. (New) The method of Claim 18, wherein the payment information comprises a calling card number.

20. (New) A system for providing clearinghouse services to a client device, comprising:
an IP network;
a proxy server;
a service point;
one or more gateways;
a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN); and

a client device for transmitting a communication session set-up request to the proxy server from a client application running on the client device, the client device and the proxy server coupled to the IP network; the client device operable for transmitting an authorization request to a clearinghouse service running on the service point, the clearinghouse service being accessible only by the proxy server and the one or more gateways; the service point operable for transmitting an authorization response to the proxy server and completing a communication session via the one or more terminating gateways to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

21. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein the authorization request comprises a called number and a call identifier.

22. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein the authorization response comprises the identity of the one or more terminating gateways coupled to the IP network and available to establish the communication session and to deliver an authorization token for each identified terminating gateway.

23. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein the communication session set-up request comprises a called number and user authentication information.